

THE LITERARY EXAMINER.

No. I.—SATURDAY, JULY 5, 1823.

THE INDICATOR.

No. LXXVII.

There he arriving, round about doth fly,
And takes survey with busie, curious eye,
Now this, now that, he tasteth tenderly.—SPENSER.

MY BOOKS.

SITTING last winter among my books, and walled round with all the comfort and protection which they and my fire-side could afford me,—to wit, a table of high-piled books at my back, my writing-desk on one side of me, some shelves on the other, and the feeling of the warm fire at my feet,—I began to consider how I loved the authors of those books; how I loved them too, not only for the imaginative pleasures they afforded me, but for their making me love the very books themselves, and delight to be in contact with them. I looked sideways at my Spenser, my Theocritus, and my Arabian Nights; then above them at my Italian Poets; then behind me at my Dryden and Pope, my Romances, and my Boccaccio; then on my left side at my Chaucer, who lay on writing-desk; and thought how natural it was in C. L. to give a kiss to an old folio, as I once saw him do to Chapman's Homer. At the same time I wondered how he could sit in that front room of his with nothing but a few unfeeling tables and chairs, or at best a few engravings in trim frames, instead of putting a couple of arm-chairs into the back room with the books in it, where there is but one window. Would I were there, with both the chairs properly filled and one or two more besides! "We had talk, Sir,"—the only talk capable of making one forget the books. Good God! I could cry like one of the Children in the Wood to think how far I and mine are from home; but this would not be "decent or manly;" so I smile instead, and am philosophic enough to make your heart ache. Besides, I shall love the country I am in more and more, and on the very account for which it angers me at present.

This is confessing a great pain in the midst of my books. I own it; and yet I feel all the pleasure in them which I have expressed.

Take me, my bookshelves, to your arms,
And shield me from the ills of life.

No disparagement to the arms of Stella; but in neither case is pain a reason why we should not have a high enjoyment of the pleasure. I entrench myself in my books, equally against sorrow and the weather. If the wind comes through a passage, I look about to see how I can fence it off by a better disposition of my moveables: if a melancholy thought is importunate, I give another glance at my Spenser. When I speak of being in contact with my books, I mean it literally. I like to be able to lean my head against them. Living in a southern climate,

though in a part sufficiently northern to feel the winter, I was obliged during that season to take some of the books out of the study, and hang them up near the fire-place in the sitting-room, which is the only room that has such a convenience. I therefore walled myself in, as well as I could, in the manner above mentioned. I took a walk every day, to the astonishment of the Genoese, who used to huddle against a bit of sunny wall, like flies on a chimney-piece. But I did this only that I might so much the more enjoy my *English* evening. The fire was a wood fire instead of a coal; but I imagined myself in the country. I remembered, at the very worst, that one end of my native land was not nearer the other, than England is to Italy.

While writing this article I am in my study again. Like the rooms in all houses in this country, which are not hovels, it is handsome and ornamented. On one side it looks towards a garden and the mountains: on another to the mountains and the sea. What signifies all this? I turn my back upon the sea: I shut up even one of the side windows looking upon the mountains; and retain no prospect but that of the trees. On the right and left of me are bookshelves: a bookcase is affectionately open in front of me; and thus kindly enclosed with my books and the green leaves, I write. If all this is too luxurious and effeminate, of all luxuries it is the one that leaves you the most strength. And this is to be said for scholarship in general. It unfits a man for activity—for his bodily part in the world: but it often doubles both the power and the sense of his mental duties: and with much indignation against his body, and more against those who tyrannize over the intellectual claims of mankind, the man of letters, like the magician of old, is prepared to “play the devil” with the great men of this world, in a style that astonishes both the sword and the toga.

I do not like this fine large study. I like elegance; I like room to breathe in, and even walk about, when I want to breathe and walk about. I like a great library next my study; but for the study itself, give me a small snug place almost entirely walled with books. There should be only one window in it, looking upon trees. Some prefer a place with few or no books at all; nothing but a chair and a table, like Epictetus: but I should say that these were philosophers, not lovers of books, if I did not recollect that Montaigne was both. He had a study in a round tower, walled as aforesaid. It is true, one forgets one's books while writing: at least they say so. For my part, I think I have them in a sort of sidelong mind's eye; like a second thought, which is none; like a waterfall, or a whispering wind.

I dislike a grand library to study in. I mean an immense apartment, with books all in Museum order, especially wire-safed. I say nothing against the Museum itself, or public libraries. They are capital places to go to, but not to sit in: and talking of this, I hate to read in a public place and in strange company. The jealous silence,—the dissatisfied looks of the messengers, the inability to help yourself, the not knowing whether you really ought to trouble the messengers, much less the Gentleman in black or brown, who is perhaps half a trustee, with a variety of other jarrings between privacy and publicity, prevent one's settling heartily to work. They say “they manage these things better in France;” and I dare say they do: but I think I should feel still more *distract* in France, in spite of the benevolence of the servitors, and the generous profusion of pen, ink, and paper. I should feel as if I were doing nothing but interchanging amenities with polite writers.

A grand private library, which the master of the house also makes his study, never looks to me like a real place of books, much less of authorship. I cannot take kindly to it. It is certainly not out of envy; for three parts of the books are generally trash, and I can seldom think of the rest and the proprietor together. It reminds me of a fine gentleman, of a collector, of a patron, of Gil Blas and the Marquis of Marialva; of anything but genius and comfort. I have a particular hatred of a round table (not *the* Round Table, for that was a dining one) covered and irradiated with books; and never met with one in the house of a clever man but once. It is the reverse of Montaigne's Round Tower. Instead of bringing the books around you, they all seem turning another way, and eluding your hands.

Conscious of my propriety and comfort in these matters, I take an interest in the bookcases, as well as books of my friends. I long to meddle, and dispose them after my own notions. When they see this confession, they will acknowledge the virtue I have practised. I believe I did mention his book room to C. L. and I think he told me that he often sat there when alone. It would be hard not to believe him. His library, though not abounding in Greek or Latin (which are the only things to help some persons to an idea of literature) is anything but superficial. The depths of philosophy and poetry are there, the innermost passages of the human heart. It has some Latin, too. It has also an handsome contempt for appearance. It looks like what it is, a selection made at precious intervals from the book-stalls; — now a Chaucer at nine and twopence; now a Montaigne or a Sir Thomas Brown at two shillings; now a Jeremy Taylor, a Spinoza; an old English Dramatist, Prior, and Sir Philip Sidney; and the books are “neat as imported.” The very perusal of the backs is a “discipline of humanity.” There Mr. Southey takes his place again with an old Radical friend: there Jeremy Collier is at peace with Dryden: there the lion, Martin Luther, lies down with the Quaker lamb, Sewell: there Guzman d'Alfarache thinks himself fit company for Sir Charles Grandison, and has his claims admitted. Even the “high fantastical” Duchess of Newcastle, with her laurel on her head, is received with grave honours, and not the less for declining to trouble herself with the constitutions of her maids. There is an approach to this in the library of W. C. who also includes Italian among his humanities. W. H., I believe, has no books, except mine; but he has Shakspeare and Rousseau by heart. N. who though not a book man by profession, is fond of those who are, and who loves his volume enough to read it across the fields, has his library in the common sitting room, which is hospitable. H. R.'s books are all too modern and finely bound, which however is not his fault, for they were left him by will,—not the most kindly act of the testator. Suppose a man were to bequeath us a great japan chest, three feet by four, with an injunction that it was always to stand on the tea-table. I remember borrowing a book of H. R. which, having lost, I replaced with a copy equally well bound. I am not sure I should have been in such haste, even to return the book, had it been a common looking volume; but the splendour of the loss dazzled me into this ostentatious piece of propriety. I set about restoring it as if I had diminished his fortunes; and waived the privilege a friend has to use a man's things as his own. I may venture upon this profligate theory, not only because candour compels me to say that I hold it in higher matters, with Montaigne, but because I have been a meek son

in the family of book-losers. I may affirm, upon a moderate calculation, that I have lent and lost in my time, (and I am eight and thirty,) half-a-dozen decent sized libraries,—I mean books enough to fill so many ordinary book cases. I have never complained; and self-love, as well as gratitude, makes me love those who do not complain of me. But like other patient people, I am inclined to burst out now that I grow less strong,—now that writing puts a hectic in my cheek. Publicity is nothing now-a-days “between friends.” There is R. not H. R. who in return for breaking a set of my English Poets, makes a point of forgetting me, whenever he has poets in his eye; which is carrying his conscience too far. But W. H. treated me worse; for not content with losing other of said English Poets, together with my Philip Sidney (all in one volume) and divers pieces of Bacon, he vows I never lent them to him; which is “the unkindest cut of all.” This comes of being magnanimous. It is a poor thing after all to be “pushed from a level consideration” of one’s superiority in matters of provocation. But W. H. is not angry on this occasion, though he is forgetful; and in spite of his offences against me and mine (not to be done away by his good word at intervals). I pardon the irritable patriot and metaphysician, who would give his last penny to an acquaintance, and his last pulse to the good of mankind. Why did he fire up at an idle word from one of the few men, who thought and felt as deeply as himself, and who “died daily” in the same awful cause? But I forgive him, because *he* forgave him; and yet I know not if I can do it for that very reason.

“Come, my best friends, my books, and lead me on:

“’Tis time that I were gone.”

I own I borrow books with as much facility as I lend. I cannot see a work that interests me on another person’s shelf, without a wish to carry it off: but, I repeat, that I have been much more sinned against than sinning in the article of non-return; and am scrupulous in the article of intention. I never had a felonious intent upon a book but once; and then I shall only say, it was under circumstances so peculiar, that I cannot but look upon the conscience that induced me to restore it, as having sacrificed the spirit of its very self to the letter; and I have a grudge against it accordingly. Some people are unwilling to lend their books. I have a special grudge against them, particularly those who accompany their unwillingness with uneasy professions to the contrary, and smiles like Sir Fretful Plagiary. The friend who helped to spoil my notions of property, or rather to make them too good for the world “as it goes,” taught me also to undervalue my squeamishness in choosing to avail myself of the books of these gentlemen. He showed me how it was doing good to all parties to put an ordinary face on the matter; though I know his own blushed not a little sometimes in doing it, even when the good to be done was for another. (Dear S. in all thy actions, small as well as great, how sure was the beauty of thy spirit to break forth!) I feel in truth, that even when anger inclines me to exercise this privilege of philosophy, it is more out of revenge than contempt. I fear that in allowing myself to borrow books, I sometimes make extremes meet in a very sinful manner, and do it out of a refined revenge. It is like eating a miser’s beef at him.

I yield to none in my love of bookstall urbanities. I have spent as happy moments over the stalls (till the woman looked out) as any literary apprentice boy who ought to be moving onwards. But I confess my weakness in liking to see some of my favourite purchases neatly

bound. The books I like to have about me most are Spenser, Chaucer, the minor poems of Milton, the Arabian Nights, Theocritus, Plato's Republic, and such old good-natured speculations as Plutarch's Morals. For most of these I love a plain good old binding, never mind how old, provided it wears well; but my Arabian Nights may be bound in as fine and flowery a style as possible, and I should like an engraving to every dozen pages. Book-prints of all sorts, bad and good, take with me as much as when I was a child: and I think some books, such as Prior's Poems, ought always to have portraits of the authors. Prior's airy face with his cap on, is like having his company. From early association, no edition of Milton pleases me so much, as that in which there are pictures of the Devil with brute ears, dressed like a Roman General: nor of Bunyan, as the one containing the print of the Valley of the Shadow of Death, with the Devil whispering in Christian's ear, old Pope sitting by the way side, and

"Vanity Fair,
With the Pilgrims suffering there."

I delight in the recollection of the puzzle I used to have with the frontispiece of the Tale of a Tub, of my real horror at the sight of that crawling old man representing Avarice, at the beginning of Enfield's Speaker, the Looking Glass, or some such book; and even of the careless school-boy hats, and the prim stomachers and cottage bonnets, of such golden-age antiquities as the Village School. The oldest and most worn-out wood cut, representing King Pepin, Goody Two Shoes, or the grim Soldan, sitting with three staring blots for his eyes and mouth, his sceptre in one hand, and his other five fingers raised and spread in admiration at the feats of the Gallant London Prentice, cannot raise in me a feeling of ingratitude or disrespect. Cooke's edition of the British Poets and Novelists came out while I was at school: for which reason I never could put up with Suttaby's or Walker's publications, except in the case of such works as the Fairy Tales, which Mr. Cooke did not publish. Besides they are too cramped, thick, and mercenary; and the pictures are all frontispieces. They do not come in at the proper places. It is like having one's pie before dinner. Cooke realized the old woman's beau ideal of a prayer book,—“A little book, with a great deal of matter, and a large type:”—for the type was really large for so small a volume. Shall I ever forget his Collins and his Gray, books at once so superbly ornamented and so inconceivably cheap? Sixpence could procure much before; but never could it procure so much as then, or was at once so much respected, and so little cared for. His artist Kirk was the best artist, except Stothard, that ever designed for periodical works; and I will venture to add (if his name rightly announces his country) the best artist Scotland ever produced, except Wilkie: but he unfortunately had not enough of his country in him to keep him from dying young. His designs for Milton and the Arabian Nights, his female extricated from the water in the Tales of the Genii, and his old hag issuing out of the chest of the Merchant Abadah in the same book, are before me now as vividly as they were then. He possessed elegance and the sense of the beauty in no ordinary degree; though they sometimes played a trick or so of foppery. I shall never forget the gratitude with which I received an odd number of Akenside, value sixpence, one of the set of that poet, which a boarder distributed among three or four of us, “with his mother's compliments.” The present might have been more lavish, but I hardly

thought of that. I remember my number. It was the one on which there is a picture of the poet on a sofa, with Cupid coming to him, and the words underneath, "Tempt me no more, insidious Love!" The picture and the number appeared to me equally divine. I cannot help thinking to this day, that it is right and natural in a gentleman to sit in a stage dress, on that particular kind of sofa, though on no other, with that exclusive hat and feathers on his head, telling Cupid to be-gone with a tragedy air. Cowley says, that even when he was "a very young boy at school, instead of his running about on holidays, and playing with his fellows, he was wont to steal from them, and walk into the fields, either alone with a book, or with some one companion, if he could find one of the same temper." When I was at school, I had no fields to run into, or I should certainly have gone there; and I must own to having played a great deal; but then I drew my sports as much as possible out of books, playing at Trojan wars, chivalrous encounters with coal-staves, and even at religious mysteries. When I was not at these games, I was either reading in a corner, or walking round the cloisters with a book under one arm, and my friend linked with the other, or with my thoughts. It has since been my fate to realize all the romantic notions I had of a friend at that time, and just as I had embraced him in a distant country, to have him torn from me. This it is that sprinkles the most cheerful of my speculations now with tears, and that must obtain me the reader's pardon for a style unusually chequered and egoistical. No man was a greater lover of books than he. He was rarely to be seen, unless attending to other people's affairs, without a volume of some sort, generally of Plato, or one of the Greek Tragedians. Nor will those who understand the real spirit of his scepticism, be surprised to hear that one of his companions was the Bible. He valued it for the beauty of some of its contents, for the dignity of others, and the curiosity of all; though the philosophy of Solomon he thought *too Epicurean*, and the inconsistencies of other parts afflicted him. His favourite part was the book of Job, which he thought the grandest of tragedies. He projected founding one of his own upon it; and I will undertake to say, that Job would have sat in that Tragedy, with a patience and a profundity of thought worthy of the original. Being asked on one occasion, what book he would save for himself, if he could save no other? he answered, "The oldest book, the Bible." It was a monument to him of the earliest, most lasting, and most awful aspirations of humanity. But more of this on a fitter occasion.*

[*To be concluded next week.*]

* I will mention, however, in this place, that an advantage of a very cunning and vindictive nature was taken of Mr. Shelley's known regard for the Bible, to represent him as having one with him at the time he was drowned. Nothing was more probable; and it is true, that he had a book in his pocket, the remains of which, at the request of the author of this article, were buried with him: but it was the volume of Mr. Keats's poems, containing *Hyperion*, of which he was a great admirer. He borrowed it of me when he went away, and knowing how I valued it also, said that he would not let it quit him till he saw me again.

REVIEW OF BOOKS.

Don Juan. Cantos VI. VII. VIII.

WE scarcely know of any thing more ludicrous, although of many more amusing, than a contemplation of the manner in which the vagaries of genius tend to the production of grave and fatiguing common-

places from a multitude of persons who can neither understand the eccentricity, nor appreciate the source of it. It is unnecessary to remark, that if the Noble Author of *Don Juan* could possibly have been overwhelmed by this sort of matter, he would by this time have been buried under a heap which, to borrow the hyperbole of the brother of Ophelia, might

“ O’ertop old Pelion, or the skyish head
“ Of blue Olympus.”

There is happily, however, no extinguishment of soul, no annihilation of intellect, to be effected by this process at the present time of day, so that *honest* dulness may be allowed its unavoidable portion of expletive with great complacency. Nay, if uttered with sincerity, and on a supposition, as Figaro says, that the good people “ think that they are thinking,” their *platitudes* are to be endured, like a passing cloud, at which, although it afflicts us with the vapours, it is useless to repine. We are not to expect the bat to track the flash which precedes a thunder-clap, or the mole to adjust and ascertain the polarity of light.

But if the numerous class of innocent and well intentioned venters of no-meaning are to be thus tolerated, we are not aware of the existence of any species of literary chivalry, which demands an equal degree of consideration for the rancour of disappointed venality—the affected horror of alarmed and becloaked hypocrisy—the yell of low political hostility, and the artificial hiss of the whole serpentine train of corruption—“ complicated monsters,” who in the variety and nature of their powers, and motives of annoyance, may be figuratively compared to their prototypes in Pandemonium:—

“ Scorpion, and Asp, and Amphisbæna dire,
Cerastes horn’d, Hydrus, and Elops drear,
And Dipsas.”

Need we say, that nearly all those who affect to sound the tocsin upon every sally of imagination by Lord Byron, may be classed under one or other of the foregoing divisions? The venality that would embrace the profits, while it avoided the responsibility, is known to all men;—the hypocrisy and cant, under the name of equity, that would undermine property, and suffer legitimate fraud to acquire an unprincipled and dangerous controul over the press, have been rendered equally evident. As to low political hostility, is it possible to consider any thing *more* low, contemptible, abject, rancorous, crawling—and, for the honour of the country, we hope to add silly—than the wretched attack of the Constitutional Society? And as to the anonymous creatures of venom, *they* abound in every dirty pool, which stagnates and breeds things of slime, under the sun of a corruptive influence. What is the crime of Lord Byron with this crew—the boldness of his occasional scepticism?—Not a jot. His treatment of the “ good old King?”—Pish!—the mere adoption of a rallying point, to furnish a new experiment upon the card-purses of old women. Mr. Charles Murray’s bills run high, and the funds of the Society low. Is it a dangerous portion of license and freedom in *Don Juan*?—How edifying this objection, considering that the *John Bull* is under the especial patronage and protection of the Church! What then is the real offence of his Lordship? How rapidly told! HE,—a nobleman,—has burst the enthrallment of rank and station; nay more, the stronger ligatures of an aristocratical bias, and declared for the Many against the Few. His powerful spirit has embraced the cause of the politically oppressed, and aided to expose and to scourge that great piece of general social treason, the Holy Al-

liance. This it is, which has subjected Lord Byron to the enmity and anger by which, in certain quarters, he is so much honoured; and but for this, he might have written like Rochester, intrigued like Buckingham, and acted all sorts of folly in the manner of Wharton. Nay, his expedition with Satan after the origin of evil, in the person of Cain, would have passed from the Creator of well-fed Rectors, and bowing Deans; a position which has been proved by much kindred matter-of-fact. In a word, the yelpers are a-slip, not for what Lord Byron is, but for what he is not. He might have been all that he is with perfect impunity, save a liberal Lord, which agrees neither with the conservative principle of the great Holy Alliance, nor the little Constitutional Society,—with the confederate interests, nor the proprietary Oligarchy that oppress the British system, all of which, in their several degrees, claim a *vested* right to impede the genial march of society, and make a property of the common rights of mankind.

Having eased our mind by a little general appreciation of the common-place, the cant, and the malignity against Lord Byron, the source of which is so obvious; and protesting against any sort of intention of interfering with the just rights of sound and honest criticism,—to which, whether springing out of differences of taste, feeling, or sincere opinion, he is of course as amenable as the meanest shrub of Parnassus,—we drop at once to a consideration of that poem in particular, the continuation of which has led to the present article.

Of the general characteristics of *Don Juan*, it would now be almost impertinent to dilate. We shall therefore spare ourselves all expatiation upon its felicitous combination of description, humour, pathos, and keen and pervading satire; the last of which, after all, we apprehend is what disturbs the moral prudery of the well-dressed mob more than those amatory scenes and glowing descriptions to which the manifestation of the said disturbance is so greatly attributed. The first canto, for instance—Are certain people quite so alarmed at the loves of Don Juan and Donna Julia, as at certain tangential strokes in the delineation of the character of the hero's grave and prudential mother, and transient glances at the infirmities and peccadilloes of good sort of people? The same story told in another manner, they would possibly regard as a moral tale; but this air *riant*, and disturbance of composed masks and orderly decencies, are unbearable. Circumspection avails nothing in this case, and (*contra bonos mores*) the “simulars of virtue” are in as much danger as the vicious—a frightful and comprehensive calamity. To be sure, we have heard the objection urged very speciously. We do not like to be eternally put upon the weak or wicked points of our nature; and in poetry particularly, prefer more gentle portraiture,—“Alice Fell,” and the “Thoughts too deep for tears.” Without deciding whether some of the latter may not be found even in the stanzas of *Don Juan*, we utterly protest against this very convenient species of interdiction, which, we maintain, would foster every species of rancorous weed, by the mere absence of annoyance. It would require more time and space than the nature of this publication will allow, to enter into a comparison of the advantages to be derived from the exaltation of conspicuous virtue and the exposure of latent vice; but if both are good, Lord Byron is vindicated; and every body must allow that the latter is the most fruitful field. Sound divines (not being Court Chaplains) take both ways, ~~we~~ believe; an observation that drops from us in the pure spirit of orthodoxy. Again: Lord Byron *will* take up

such dark-featured and reckless heroes! This remark, by the by, was made by a critic in a daily print, in relation to *The Island*. It was strange that Lord Byron should persist in choosing such heroes as Christian (the main incident of whose life is almost poetry in plain narrative); it was quite sickening to hear eternally of such people. Now we need not inform those who have read the poem, that Christian is scarcely its hero; and that nothing anticipated by the honest scribe, who had merely seen it new in the shop windows, is to be found in it. The entire spirit of this sort of observation is however false and erroneous. Virtue, define it as we may, consists chiefly in forbearance, negation, and the mastery of the passions. We may go still further, and add, that even its activity wears the aspect of self-denial, as all the self-devotion of Greek and Roman story—all that we understand of exalted virtue, from Alfred to Washington, will testify. This is well in fact, but is it so in poetry? Or, in plainer terms, is it not the force, prevalence, and violence of the passions, which supply the latter with the richest *materiel*? From the very nature of things it must be so, as Milton found out in *Paradise Lost*, his Satan being objected to on this very account; and to talk a hundred years old, that is to say, in reference to Homer and Virgil,—who prefers not, poetically speaking, the fierce and wrathful Achilles, to the *Dux Trojanus*, the pious Æneas? The lofty department of tragedy, what is its essence?—Masterless passion; the absence of which, and the poor substitution of mere poetry, make some recent efforts so very mawkish. Let us hear no more of this.

Looking at *Don Juan* as far as it has gone, it is quite obvious, that having taken up the general conception, Lord Byron has bound himself to no particular series of adventures, but writes on under the influence of his immediate impulses. Every one is aware that there is both loss and gain by this process; that something is lost in unity and consistency of object, and something gained in occasional freshness and spirit. It may be further observed, that, after all, *Don Juan* is not an epic; and that we can scarcely conceive an outline more capable of excursion *ad libitum* than the pilotage of a Don Galaor of headlong courage and boundless adventure to the gates of hell. This, however, is a secondary consideration; as we have already hinted, this conspicuous and alarming attribute of Lord Byron is an intuitive perception of the almost mathematical point which marks the confines of vice and virtue, harmlessness and innocence; and a rapid detection of the approximation of extremes, which renders him the Asmodeus or Mephistophiles of poets, a creature which penetrates into your secrets at will. This is startling to every one, but absolutely terrific to the orderly people, who, muffled up in exterior decencies, place well-doing in a mental costume. We never heard an individual express more horror at the first canto of *Don Juan* than a grave merchant, who regularly sent his clerk out of the way to take tea with his wife; or a woman more piously outraged by it than the mistress of the man who married her. These persons felt themselves detected. It is not confounding good and evil to shew the slightness of the partitions which divide them; on the contrary, the former may be guarded and secured by a dread of the rapidity of glance which can at once perceive and expose the myriads of lurking avenues by which the one can slide into the other.

And now for the sixth canto of *Don Juan*, which is in strict and regular continuation of the fifth, being the sequel of the adventures of the disguised and amatory Don in the Turkish Seraglio. It commences

with a pleasant parody, in application to woman, of "There is a tide in the affairs of men." In respect to the former, the poet opines that—

Those navigators must be able seamen
Whose charts lay down its current to a hair;
Not all the reveries of Jacob Behmen
With its strange whirls and eddies can compare:—
Men with their heads reflect on this and that—
But women with their hearts or heaven knows what!

Not the less influentially, however, it appears—

And yet a headlong, headstrong, downright she,
Young, beautiful, and daring—who would risk
A throne, the world, the universe, to be
Beloved in her own way, and rather whisk
The stars from out the sky, than not be free
As are the billows when the breeze is brisk—
Though such a she's a devil (if that there be one)
Yet she would make full many a Manichean.

The Author moralizes for several stanzas in this strain; but in allusion to a little finesse on the part of the favourite Sultana (who had managed the introduction of Don Juan in female disguise) to her awful Sultan, thus beautifully distinguishes between feminine love and the affectation of it:—

A slight blush, a soft tremor, a calm kind
Of gentle, feminine delight, and shown
More in the eyelids than the eyes, resigned
Rather to hide what pleases most unknown,
Are the best tokens (to a modest mind)
Of love, when seated on his loveliest throne,
A sincere woman's breast,—for over *warm*
Or over *cold* annihilates the charm.

We must be very general in our outline. The convenient nondescript, who to oblige the Sultana managed the entry of Don Juan into the harem, is under the necessity of trusting to his discretion, by allowing him to share the accommodation of one of the beauties of the establishment, three of whom are described with those graces which prove most attractive to the people whom certain Christians think the fittest in the world to govern Greece. We supply the portraiture:—

Of those who had most genius for this sort
Of sentimental friendship, there were three,
Lolah, Katinka, and Dudù; in short,
(To save description) fair as fair can be
Were they, according to the best report,
Though differing in stature and degree,
And clime and time, and country and complexion;
They all alike admired their new connexion.
Lolah was dusk as India and as warm;
Katinka was a Georgian, white and red,
With great blue eyes, a lovely hand and arm,
And feet so small they scarce seemed made to tread,
But rather skim the earth; while Dudù's form
Looked more adapted to be put to bed,
Being somewhat large and languishing and lazy,
Yet of a beauty that would drive you crazy.
A kind of sleepy Venus seemed Dudù,
Yet very fit to "murder sleep" in those
Who gazed upon her cheek's transcendant hue,
Her Attic forehead, and her Phidian nose:
Few angles were there in her form, 'tis true,
Thinner she might have been and yet scarce lose;
Yet, after all, 'twould puzzle to say where
It would not spoil some separate charm *to pare*.
She was not violently lively, but
Stole on your spirit like a May-day breaking;

Her eyes were not too sparkling, yet, half-shut,
 They put beholders in a tender taking;
 She looked (this simile's quite new) just cut
 From marble, like Pygmalion's statue waking,
 The Mortal and the Marble still at strife,
 And timidly expanding into life.

The appropriation of the disguised Juan of course produces some confusion; and the haughty Sultana learns from her creature the trust he has been obliged to put in his prudence. She has no confidence in his share of that same cardinal virtue, and her feminine agitation and distress is thus beautifully depicted:—

She stood a moment as a Pythoness
 Stands on her tripod, agonized, and full
 Of Inspiration gathered from Distress,
 When all the heart-strings like wild horses pull
 The heart asunder;—then, as more or less
 Their speed abated or their strength grew dull,
 She sunk down on her seat by slow degrees,
 And bowed her throbbing head o'er trembling knees.
 Her face declined and was unseen; her hair
 Fell in long tresses, like the weeping willow,
 Sweeping the marble underneath her chair,
 Or rather sofa (for it was all pillow,
 A low, soft Ottoman) and black Despair
 Stirred up and down her bosom like a billow,
 Which rushes to some shore whose shingles check
 Its farther course, but must receive its wreck.
 Her head hung down, and her long hair in stooping
 Concealed her features better than a veil;
 And one hand o'er the Ottoman lay drooping,
 White, waxen, and as alabaster pale:
 Would that I were a painter! to be grouping
 All that a poet drags into detail!
 Oh that my words were colours! but their tints
 May serve perhaps as outlines or slight hints.

We are to suppose she is inexorable, for the Eunuch is ordered to get a boat under the palace wall to execute her orders; the absolute fact, however, is left in doubt, as here the stanza closes. To ease the great anxiety of the reader, however, we will just allow him to know, that in the next canto (of which more in our next number) Don Juan, a Turkish lady, and an old man, suddenly make their appearance in the Russian camp before Ismail, and are presented to Suwarrow,—so that all fear of the premature death of the hero may be at once dismissed.

The general complexion of this canto, it will be perceived, is *couleur de rose*, and skittish; but more in the way of humour than luxuriance,—a step in the education of Juan pleasantly related and rapidly dismissed. The succeeding cantos breathe more of fire and sword; but we will not anticipate.

We must not forget to remark, that these cantos are preceded by a preface of a very piquant description, in which Lord Byron explains himself, as to the late Marquis of Londonderry, with very marked significance. Not only so,—he briefly but forcibly expresses his contempt for “the hypocritical mass which leavens the present English generation.” This is as it should be: it would be melancholy indeed, if a confederacy of the lowest and most unprincipled hypocrites—of the most base and slavish designers on the face of the earth, could impede the free breathings of mind as successfully as they crush the infant liberty of exhausted nations—crib and confine the impulses of genius, like Gulliver in Lilliput, by the cobwebbery of a multiplicity of dirty ligature, spun from the brain and bowels of a combination of reptiles,

some of whom manhood can scarcely name, or womanhood imagine. It is quite enough that the *vis inertiae* of society exacts so large a tribute of attention to the conventional jargon which, among the high and low vulgar, is substituted for the native convictions of reason and common sense; it would be still more miserable, if every grade of intellect could be made to succumb. Of this, however, thank heaven, there is little danger; the march of mental freedom and of social and political amelioration has commenced, and what monarch or monarchs can effectually stay it? The command of King Canute to the waves of the sea to stand still, had he even expected obedience, would have been reasonable in comparison with this fond attempt; for the ocean, although magnificent, is limitable, but who can assign boundaries to mind? or at least to the diffusion which advances the mass of it, and which is industriously and insidiously confounded, by those who dread its ultimate consequences, with certain romantic notions of the perfectibility of the individual. Happily, amidst all the fluctuations of success and misfortune, which alternately exalt and depress the friends of political liberty, this truth is eternally perceptible. It is not obscured because Angouleme is at Madrid, French gold triumphant in Portugal, or another Turkish fleet at sea, to reiterate massacres of Scio. Revived Inquisitions abroad, and attempted ones at home, cannot shadow it; nor senatorial servility, foolishness, and evasion, extinguish it. Even law, which is so successful against *all* light, finds it a species of Greek fire; and like the bright cloud which guided the Israelites through the wilderness, however devious the path to be trodden, it will not cease to shine and inspirit the human progress until, triumphant over every obstacle, mankind, in the attainment of genuine liberty, and equal political rights, shall have reached the promised land.

Sketches in Bedlam, or Characteristic Traits of Insanity, as displayed in the cases of 140 Patients of both sexes, now or recently confined in Bedlam.

Of all the gross and disgusting instances of coarseness and want of feeling in the pursuit of temporary emolument, we think this publication is one of the most unpardonable. Here are the connexions of no less than 140 persons rendered unhappy and uneasy, to say nothing of certain of the parties discharged cured, in order that some miserable book-maker may pocket a few pounds in his calling. We know not whether this be the book to which Mr. Brougham alluded on Monday last, in the House of Commons; we apprehend not; but if so, it may pair off with it in offensiveness and barbarity. We can conceive nothing less amusing, than a dull common-place detail of the ravings, wanderings, and habits of confirmed insanity, unilluminated by a single iota of physiological acquirement, medical experience, or vivid and discriminating powers of description. It is unnecessary to say that much of such detail must necessarily be abominably nauseous, if not indecent; and we may observe that, in this respect, the extreme vulgarity and want of feeling which originated the work, have been very faithfully displayed in its execution. We cannot sully our columns with example, but we request those who may meet with the book to turn to pages 113 and 128, and ask themselves what they think of the information there bestowed. Such exposures are indefensible on the score of common decorum; but what is to be said of exhibiting an unhappy, and possibly a recoverable individual, as a spectacle to the public, to the an-

noyance of every one belonging to him, for such information as the following :—We of course omit the names :—

———, aged thirty-two, admitted 28th June, 1821. This patient had been once in very respectable life, was occupied as a ship broker, and his derangement was ascribed to heavy losses and disappointments in business. He appeared to have been a very genteel man ; perfectly harmless and well conducted for some time after his first admission : but afterwards his disorder became high. He tore his clothes, and became, in his opinion, a very great man. He had in his own hands the insurance of all outward-bound ships from the river Thames to every part of the globe ; and, in fact, no ship left the river without having Mr. ———'s seal affixed to her. He knew every body by name, but none by sight. He transacted all his business without ever seeing the principals ; and ever since he came here, he had done, in imagination, insurance business to the extent of hundreds of thousands.

He was at all times very cheerful, danced and sung, and made many promises of conferring numerous appointments and lucrative situations on his poor fellow-patients. He was at length found to be paralytic, and was discharged. His friends were respectable, and he was known to many opulent merchants in London.

We supply an equally useless and barbarous disregard of family and connexion in a female instance, a sample of many more :

Charlotte ———, aged forty-five, belonged to Putney, and was transferred hither from Old Bethlehem : she is a married woman, and mother of a family. This poor woman has contracted a most singular persuasion : she fancies herself to be a man, and sometimes styles herself a boy ; and, when spoken to, she bows, scrapes, and puts her hand to her head in every respect like a footman.

She is particularly attached to the matron, whom she calls her beauty, and is quite uneasy every day until she sees her.

There is nothing else particularly remarkable in her manner ; she is orderly, cleanly in her person and habits, and perfectly quiet and harmless.

This is mere gratuitous brutality ; for what is learned by the foregoing information ? and with regard to more remarkable cases, as told by this vulgar and unfeeling narrator, they convey nothing from which the slightest instruction can be derived. Another species of injury is also the frequent result. It is well known that the current of thought and expression in insanity is frequently directly opposed to that of the same individual in a sane state ; yet our book-maker is continually inferring the one from the other ; and all his humour—for, a genuine son of gentle dulness, he loves his joke—is elicited by this supposed connexion. In a word, a more inexcusable production never insulted the sense and humanity of the public.

If we may be allowed to extract one piece of general information from so despicable a source, we will confine it to the observation, that in the feminine cases, we were surprised at the number of heads disordered by fancied calls and religious fanaticism.

Memoirs of the Life and Writings of William Hayley, Esq. the Friend and Biographer of Cowper, written by himself.

We are not aware of any possible position, in relation to the general estimation of society, more equivocal than that of an aged literary veteran, who has lived to witness an entire revolution of opinion in respect to the character and merits of the school in which he has been an ardent if not a leading student,—an amusing, and amiable writer, if not one of the lights of his age. Such a person was Hayley, who, but for his life of Cowper, we apprehend a great number of readers of the present generation would scarcely know by name. To the great success of the latter's biography, we shrewdly suspect we owe the ponderous volumes before us, which, if compiled with a view to publication, and such was doubtless the case, exhibit as fine an illustration of the importance of a man to himself as we ever beheld. Hayley was a gentleman and a scholar, but nothing less than a successful author, even

at a period when Poetry, generally speaking, with a few honourable exceptions, aimed at little beyond trim classicality ; Humour, to a variation of the sketches of the Spectator and its progeny, (Fielding and Smollet were past) with the occasional *sauce piquante* of a New Bath Guide, or an epistle to Sir William Chambers ; and Wit, to, now and then, a sprightly comedy, an abundance of epigrams and "such small deer." His dramas in rhyme, at this time of day, can scarcely encounter the perusal of persons exceeding the age of fourteen ; and his Triumphs of Temper, considering its former popularity, in this age of more forcible appeal and varied association, appears to us inexpressibly mawkish. His best works, in our estimation, are his "Young Widow," which few people read when it was published, and scarcely any body since ; and his "Essay on Old Maids," which naturally producing no small portion of anger in a very irritable class, met with general attention. As for his *Vers de Societ *, which he appears to have thought very highly of himself, they are of the usual stuff of which such things are made,—eulogy of course is abundant ; and most people recollect the wicked wit of Porson, in relation to the too lavish exchange of panegyric between him and Miss Seward. His compliment, congratulation, and condolence, found vent chiefly in octosyllabic verse, which could excite no vast deal of posthumous interest, even at a time when such composition was fashionable ; but what can render it palatable some thirty years after the taste has expired ? We know of nothing more difficult than to revive a relish for associations which have attained their natural period of decay, in the production of mental satiety. If something of this languor be perceptible even in the spirited resuscitation of Geoffrey Crayon, how little is to be expected from the tame and spiritless muse of Mr. Hayley. Two ponderous quarto volumes, half filled with defunct matter of this nature, are too much. Such a freightage might sink a seventy-four, to say nothing of a cockboat.

But this is a life, it may be said,—a piece of auto-biography ; and a man of longevity like Hayley, moving in a respectable sphere, tolerably widely acquainted, and moreover eternally with a pen in his hand, may write a very pleasant account of himself and acquaintances, without any great claims of his own ; as for example James Boswell and others. Nothing can be more correct ; but it unfortunately happens, that owing to the very recluse and retired habits of Hayley,—habits which seem to have led to a separation from both his wives—excluded almost always in his beautiful family and village retirement in Sussex, with a determined resolution neither to visit or be visited, what is such a life to present ? Lastly, as if every thing should conspire to make the work dull, the deceased has written his narrative chiefly in the sketchy way of note and memorandum, and in the unnatural and constrained form of the third person. A recipe for the production of *ennui* could scarcely have prescribed a method more appalling.

Are these volumes, then, *entirely* destitute of interest ? Certainly not ; but it is far too little to inspire so ponderous a mass of matter. There are, doubtless, some contemporary venerables existing, who will wade through it with satisfaction ; and some of a succeeding generation, who, from connection, acquaintance, or other reasons, may also feel interested. The hop-skip-and-jump tribe may also dip and try their fortune, with now and then the possibility of bringing up a stray anecdote or sexagenary incident worth remembering.

Hayley was a neighbour of Gibbon, and in consequence of a weak-

ness in his eyes, as he never attended public worship personally, some people suspected his orthodoxy. We are happy to add, on the testimony of the Editor, the Rev. John Johnson, Rector of Yardham in Norfolk, substantiated by the very important document of a creed in his own hand-writing, which is judiciously supplied, that this very ominous imputation was unfounded. Q.

BLACKWOOD'S MAGAZINE!

WE shall have something to say, probably, from time to time, on the subject of this notorious publication. The public may be assured, that nothing is wanting but to take this goat by the horns, in order to show how weak as well as worthless it is.

The system at present pursued by the Scotch scribblers is,—not to attack the rival Magazines as formerly, when they were worsted, but—to assail, by every species of unjust and impudent invective, *the individuals* who sustain the weight of those publications. Accordingly, we find that they have left off abusing the “London” and sneering at “Colburn’s” Magazine, in order to cast their scurrility upon the contributors to each. They have abused or ridiculed, successively, Mr. Hazlitt, Mr. Thomas Campbell, Mr. Charles Lamb, the “Opium Eater,” the author of “Letters on England,” Mr. Reynolds, Allan Cunningham, Barry Cornwall, Mr. Bowring (we believe) Janus Weathercock, &c. &c. together with other gentlemen whom we can only specify by recurring to the Scotch Magazine. Now, *we know that Blackwood applied to several of these Gentlemen, and pressed them to contribute to his Magazine, and that when they declined to do so or abandoned it, he began to insult them.*

The reader will perceive, that the object of Blackwood’s crew is to neutralize, as far as possible, the effect of the writings of certain *known* contributors to the rival Magazines, perhaps to embroil them with the editors: for this will almost necessarily be the case, if the respective Magazines do not take up the cause of their partizans, and repel the attacks of the Scotchmen. We think that this may very easily be done, and that *it ought to be done.*

Persons familiar with Blackwood’s writers, will recollect, that they have insulted not only the Edinburgh, but the Quarterly Review, Constable’s, the London, the Monthly (*both new and old*) the Gentleman’s Magazines, one after the other, as the falling off in their own sale, we suppose, required. Now, there is no existing work which has had recourse to such contemptible expedients, to lift itself into a short and bad popularity. There is, moreover, no humour so cheap, as that which springs from personal attack. Suppose we were (and we might make some amusing articles)—to touch upon the following points? [We are not sure that we shall not do so,—we shall turn the matter over in our minds.]

1. Private Memoirs of young Lockit, the Ballad-vamper.
2. The Literary Haberdasher; or a Picture of the Back Room in Dundas-street.
3. A Map of the Road to the Chair of Moral Philosophy.
4. The Son-in-law, or Curtain Lectures—(The Wife’s Tale.)
5. The Baronet’s Table, or the Vacant Place.
6. The Retreat of one of the Ten Thousand.
7. Sandy Eitherside, or the Puff and the Plague—

with others too numerous to mention.—Till we determine upon this

point, the reader who still "hankers after" Blackwood,—(if indeed there be one still remaining amongst *gentlemen*)—will do well to see how the editors can both puff and defame,—in the cases of Wordsworth, Coleridge, &c. whose contributions have either bribed them to praise, or whose defection has stung them into impudent detraction.

ARMATUS.

THE AUTHORS' SONG.

FOR THE POETS' CATCH-CLUB.

1.

COME! Fill high! Another song!
Never let us linger long
On the parch'd and thirsty strand,
Where dull duns and critics stand.
Each is spelling, as he lingers,
One his warrant, one his fingers,—
Both, in study or in street,
Watching for our erring feet.

2.

Fill the glasses! Let us sing
Honour to the Poets' King,
Phœbus—Pythius—young Apollo!
He who drinks not, let him halloo
From the shadow of his bays
To the Sun, a thousand ways,
"Honour to the God of Story,
First in light, and first in glory!"

3.

Fill again! The duns are near us:
Let us force the knaves to fear us,
And the critics,—worse and worse,—
By the splendour of our curse.
Rebels to the seat of light—
Duns, whose bills are never right—
Critics, made of mood and tense—
Dunces, lost 'tween sound and sense—

4.

Hear us!—From our lofty level,
Lo! we pitch ye to the d---l,
With your items, totals, lines,
And your sixes turned to nines,—
With your trash of stops and commas,
And your damnable dilemmas,—
Be ye critics, be ye duns,
What have ye to do with Suns!

5.

May lean Spite and Envy cherish
Both, until ye starve, and perish!
May the ragged author's coat
Round your frozen shoulders float!
May ye eat the author's dinner,
Shunned by saint, and scorned by sinner,
Like the leper in his woe,
Till ye to "the downwards" go!

6.

Hence! Avaunt! Be quick, and flee!
Suns and starry souls are we.
Leave us to our wealth of soul,
And the fullness of our bowl—
Ha!—'tis empty. Fill again!
Let us drown the dream of pain
In the crimson light of wine,
Which, though earthly, is divine!